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ABSTRACT

This study examined the ways in which adult, Korean, English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) learners performed the "request" speech act, with particular attention to deviations caused by negative transfer. An oral discourse completion test with six request situations was given to three groups of learners; situations varied in terms of the interlocutors' role relationships. One group of native American English request responses was used as the baseline data while one group of 10 Korean subjects served as nonnative English respondents and another group of 15 Korean subjects served as native Korean respondents. American subjects were graduate students, aged 23-30 years; Korean subjects were 21- to 30-years-old and had been in the United States from 1-9 months. In all three language groups, request realization (directness levels and supportive moves) were significantly determined by the sociopragmatic features of the situational context. However, nonnative speakers deviated from native English speaker norms in some situations due to the effect of the pragmatic rules of Korean. (Contains 23 references.) (Author/NAV)

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"Could You Calm Down More?": Requests and Korean ESL Learners

Julie Kim

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"Could You Calm Down More?": Requests and Korean ESL Learners

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This study examines the ways in which adult Korean ESL learners perform one speech act, the request, with particular attention to deviations caused by negative transfer. For this purpose, an oral discourse completion test including six request situations was given to three groups; one group of native American English request responses was used as baseline data while one group of Korean subjects served as nonnative English respondents and another group of Korean subjects served as native Korean respondents. In all three language groups, request realizations (directness levels and supportive moves) are significantly determined by the sociopragmatic features of the situational context. However, nonnative speakers deviated from native English speaker norms in some situations due to the effect of the pragmatic rules of Korean.

Research in interlanguage pragmatics has shown that even advanced learners' speech act performance commonly deviates from target language conventionality patterns and may fail to convey the intended illocutionary point or politeness value (e.g., Cohen & Olshtain 1980: 113-134; Wolfson 1989; Takahashi & Beebe 1987: 131-155; Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper 1989; Edmonson & House 1991: 64). Among the various attempts to account for both the underlying processes and communicative effects of such pragmatic deviations, research on negative pragmatic transfer has played a significant role in explaining the formation of interlanguage (Takahashi & Beebe 1987: 131-155; Wolfson 1989; Kasper 1992: 203-231).

It is the purpose of this study to examine the ways in which adult Korean ESL learners perform one speech act, the request, with particular attention to deviations caused by negative transfer. Requests are a frequent and useful speech act, permit a wide variety of strategies, and have high social stakes; for those reasons they are important for second language educators and others involved in cross-cultural communication. Although requests have frequently been studied, it is important to find out about requests in language groups which have not been studied.

Request Schema

Requests are pre-event speech acts which affect the hearer's behavior. Previous studies of requests in several languages have revealed the universal richness available in the modes of performance of a request and the high communicative and social stakes involved in the choice of a specific request form (Ervin-Tripp 1976: 25-66; Brown & Levinson 1987). In order to understand the interlanguage pragmatics of requestive behavior, we must first consider the linguistic, social, and cultural types of information on which speakers rely in comprehending and producing requests.

According to Blum-Kulka (1991: 64), the motivational, intentional source of the request is the *requestive goal*, which speakers strive to achieve with maximum effectiveness and politeness. Requests vary in goals from the least coercive requests (e.g., asking for information, permission, goods, etc.) to the most coercive (e.g., action). In choosing the means by which to perform the request, *effectiveness* is important. An effective request is one in which the hearer clearly recognizes the speaker's intent. However, effectiveness can conflict with *politeness* (Blum-Kulka 1991: 64; Brown & Levinson 1987). For example, the request "Drive me home" may be the most direct and therefore, effective way to perform a request, but it would certainly not be considered the most polite way in most contexts. On the other hand, the most indirect way of performing a request is not necessarily the most polite one (Blum-Kulka 1991: 64; Brown & Levinson 1987).

The decision to perform a specific requestive goal is subject to a *cultural filter* (Blum-Kulka 1991: 64). For example, requests for information concerning age will be acceptable in Korean culture but taboo in other cultures. The degree of imposition involved in a specific request for action (illocutionary act) will also be weighed in culturally relative ways, and in turn might lead to its avoidance or affect its mode of performance.

In her research on requests, Blum-Kulka (1983: 36-55) indicated that although there are some rules that do seem to be less language- and culture-specific than others, one of the major problems confronted by L2 learners deals with the inappropriate transfer of sociolinguistic rules. In arguing against the universalist hypothesis,[1] Blum-Kulka states:

> Contrary to such claims, I would like to argue that the nature of interdependence among pragmatic, linguistic, and social factors that determine speech-act realization varies from one language to another, and that as a result, L2 learners often fail to realize their speech acts in the target language both in terms of effectiveness and in terms of social appropriateness (Blum-Kulka 1983: 38).

[1]Fraser (1978: 1-21) has claimed that the strategies for performing illocutionary acts are essentially the same across languages. He uses the term "strategy" to refer to "the particular choice of sentential form and meaning which the speaker employs in order to perform the intended act" (Fraser 1978: 12).

L2 learners' request performance often violates norms of appropriateness due to negative transfer, but sometimes differs from both native and target language usage due to interlanguage development (Kasper 1992: 203-231).

The broadest study on requests to date has been the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP) (Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper 1989). The aim of this study was to compare speech act realizations of native and non-native speakers under different social constraints across seven languages (Australian English, British English, American English, French, German, Danish, and Hebrew). Data were elicited by means of a discourse completion test (DCT).

The findings of CCSARP that are pertinent to the present study are as follows:

1) Learners vary the strategies used by situation, and

2) Learners vary the type and quantity of external modification by situation.

Situational variability in choice of directness levels can link L2 learners with their L1. In CCSARP data (House & Kasper 1987: 1250-1288) Germans used the most direct level far more frequently than native British English speakers in two situations—in the case of a policeman asking a driver to move her car ('Policeman request') and the case of asking a roommate to clean the kitchen ('Kitchen request'). The researchers claimed that the German learners' usage of imperatives is most likely a result of negative transfer from their native language into their English interlanguage.

On the other hand, it has been claimed that certain deviations of interlanguage request performance, such as overelaboration in the use of supportive moves, persist regardless of mother tongue. It has been hypothesized that learners are more verbose than native speakers because learners try to compensate for their language difficulties by adding a great deal of unnecessary information (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain 1986: 47-61; House & Kasper 1987: 1250-1288; Edmonson & House 1991: 64).

Although the CCSARP was a comprehensive study of request realizations, there are two major shortcomings that need to be addressed. First, the researchers failed to include other languages and cultures in their data. Perhaps the language groups used as subjects for CCSARP were the most pertinent subjects of study for the researchers and their respective locations. However, for ESL instructors in the United States, it is extremely important to learn more about the groups of international students who make up a large portion of local enrollment. Students from Japan and Korea usually make up the largest groups in intensive English programs across the United States. Although some research has been done concerning Japanese learners and speech acts (Takahashi & Beebe 1987: 131-155; Beebe & Takahashi 1989; Beebe, Takahashi & Uliss-Weltz 1990), research is needed in the area of Korean learners of English and their speech act realizations.

Second, although DCTs allow the researcher to gather large amounts of data quickly and control for specific variables of the situation, data collected in this manner cannot produce all the information needed about the ways in which speech acts are performed; writing an answer permits more time to plan and evaluate than does orally performing the speech act. Indeed, DCTs have underlying limitations which make it impossible to collect the kind of elaborated behavior found in oral speech (Wolfson 1989; Beebe & Cummings 1994).

The specific questions addressed in this study are the following:

1) Under varying social constraints, how do advanced Korean learners of English compare to native American English speakers in request realizations—or more specifically, in directness levels and external modifications?

2) By including a comparison of Korean subjects requesting in English and subjects requesting in Korean, will there be any evidence of negative transfer? If so, under what contextual conditions?

Method

Two groups of subjects participated in this study. One group consisted of 25 native Korean speakers (13 male, 12 female) who were enrolled in high intermediate to advanced level ESL classes or as graduate students in a university in Philadelphia. A high intermediate to advanced group of learners was chosen with the expectation that they would have a larger linguistic repertoire and be more sensitive to the subtleties of English pragmatics than would be less advanced learners. The Korean-speaking subjects ranged in age from 21 to 30 (average age 24) and length of stay in the United States ranged from 1 month to nine months. The other group comprised 15 native speakers of American English, 8 male and 7 female, who were enrolled in various graduate programs. The range of this group was 23 to 30 (average age 24).

In order to set up norms for "acceptable" requests, the subjects were divided into three groups. The Americans served as informants for native English speakers' requests, 10 of the native Korean speakers served as informants for requests in comparable situations in Korean, and the remaining 15 Korean speakers served as the nonnative speakers requesting in English and the main focus of this study.

Data Collection

The task consisted of an oral discourse completion test (composed for purposes of this study) with six situations each of which was designed to assess pragmatic competence among nonnative speakers of English. They included

1) asking a professor for an extension,

2) asking a friend to lend you money,

3) asking the waiter to take back an order,

4) asking a neighbor to turn down his/her music,

5) asking your boss to let you out of work early,

6) asking a little boy to go to sleep.

These situations vary in terms of the interlocutors' role relationship, i.e., on the dimensions of: dominance (professor/boss higher status than respondent; friend/neighbor at same status; waiter/little boy at lower status) and social distance (a neighbor or waiter being least familiar and a friend being most familiar), interlocutors' rights and obligations, and degree of imposition involved in the event. The full text of the situations appears in Appendix A.

The investigator first read the instructions out loud in English and then each subject was asked to read silently the six situations which were typed onto file cards in the appropriate language. Each subject was then asked to respond to the verbal cue issued by the investigator. Responses were tape-recorded and then transcribed

Data Analysis

The major aim of data analysis was to compare the request realizations of nonnative English speakers (Korean) to native American English speakers and also trace any patterns of transfer from native Korean speakers. The CCSARP (Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper 1989) coding scheme for requests served as a point of departure in setting up ways in which to analyze directness level and external support on the basis of the responses by all subjects:

1. **Directness Levels**: The CCSARP coding scheme identifies the following types or requests, according to their level of directness:[2]

A. **Mood derivable** (the grammatical mood of the verb signals the illocutionary force)

-Go to sleep!

B. **Performative** (the illocutionary force is either explicitly named or modified by hedging expressions)

-I'm requesting that you give me some extra time.

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[2]According to the CCSARP coding scheme, Performatives are split into two groups—Explicit and Hedged—and Hints are seperated into—Strong and Mild. Due to the small number of participants in this study, Explicit and Hedged Performatives will be listed under Performatives and Mild and Strong Hints under Hints.

C. **Locution derivable** (the illocutionary force is derivable directly from the semantic content of the request)

-I think you'll have to bring this back.

D. **Suggestory formulas** (a suggestion to do the action)

-How about going to sleep?

E. **Preparatory** (reference to preparatory conditions such as ability or willingness)

-Can you lend me money?

F. **Hint** (partial reference to the object or element needed for implementation of the act or no reference but still interpretable as request through context)

-I had ordered this to be well-done.

2. **External modification**: In externally modifying a central speech act, a speaker chooses to aggravate or mitigate her request by using specific types of supportive moves. Examples of aggravating supportive moves are threats or insults. Since they occur very infrequently in the data, aggravating supportive moves will be disregarded in this study.

The following mitigating supportive moves (Blum-Kulka, 1983, House & Kasper, 1989) were found in the data of the present study:

A. **Preparator**. (the speaker prepares his or her hearer for the ensuing request)

-I have a request to make.

B. **Getting a precommitment**. (In checking on a potential refusal before making his or her request, a speaker tries to commit his or her hearer before telling him or her what he is being requested)

-Could you do me a favor?

C. **Apology.** (Although not found in the CCSARP coding scheme, apologies were included as an example of a mitigating supportive move because of the frequent occurrence in the data and also quite simply because apologies mitigate the ensuing request. By apologizing, the speaker acknowledges that s/he is making an imposition on the hearer and expresses his or her regret.)

-I'm sorry, but...

D. **Grounder.** (The speaker gives reasons, explanations, or justifications for his or her request, which may precede and/or follow it.)

-I'm trying to study for an exam.

E. **Disarmer.** (The speaker tries to remove any potential objections the hearer might raise upon being confronted with the request.)

-I know you don't like this, but...

F. **Promise of reward.** (To increase the likelihood of the hearer's compliance with the speaker's request, a reward due on the fulfillment of the request is announced.)

-I'll make it up to you.

The data analysis included both identifying pragmatic deviation from native patterns of apology and investigating whether the deviation would likely be the result of negative transfer from patterns in the native language.

Table 1
Situation 1: Professor's Office

Directness Levels	Native English		Non-native English		Native Korean	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. Mood Derivable	0	0	1	6.7	1	10
2. Performative	3	20	0	0	0	0
3. Locution Derivable	0	0	0	0	0	0
4. Want Statement	1	6.7	1	6.7	1	10
5. Suggestory Formula	0	0	0	0	0	0
6. Preparatory	11	73.3	12	80	8	80
7. Hints	0	0	1	6.7	0	0
Supportive Moves[3]						
1. Preparator	8	53.3	0	0	0	0
2. Precommitment	0	0	1	6.7	0	0
3. Apology	2	13.3	7	46.7	5	50
4. Grounder	14	93.3	13	86.7	9	90
5. Disarmer	1	6.7	0	0	0	0
6. Promise of Reward	0	0	1	6.7	0	0

+dominance -social distance

Results

The results of each of the six situations are summarized in Tables 1 to 6. In Table 1, it is apparent that all three groups tend to concentrate on level 6=Preparatory conditions (*Could you give me an extension?*). On closer examination, however, the quantitative data presented here does not describe the vast difference between native and non-native speaker forms within the level of Preparatory conditions. Although native and non-native English speakers used the same level of directness, native speakers further mitigated their requests by using internal modification plus routinization. Native speakers commonly used phrases like: *I was wondering if I could get an extension on the due date...*or *Would it be possible to get a few more days to write my paper?* while Preparatory requests of the type: *can/could you do X...?* were heavily routinized in nonnative speaker behavior.

[3]Each respondent may have used none, one, or more than one supportive move. Each type of move used by the respondents has been accounted for. Therefore, totals in this section will not necessarily equal 100 percent.

Table 2
Situation 2: Money

Directness Levels	Native English		Non-native English		Native Korean	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. Mood Derivable	2	13.3	2	13.3	2	20
2. Performative	0	0	0	0	0	0
3. Locution Derivable	0	0	0	0	0	0
4. Want Statement	1	6.7	2	13.3	1	10
5. Suggestory Formula	0	0	0	0	0	0
6. Preparatory	12	80	11	73.3	7	70
7. Hints	0	0	0	0	0	0
Supportive Moves						
1. Preparator	0	0	0	0	0	0
2. Precommitment	1	6.7	0	0	0	0
3. Apology	0	0	0	0	0	0
4. Grounder	7	46.7	13	86.7	8	80
5. Disarmer	0	0	0	0	0	0
6. Promise of Reward	5	33.3	5	33.3	3	30

+dominance -social distance

As for external modifications, 53% of the native English speaking subjects used Preparators while neither of the two Korean groups used Preparators at all. All three groups used Grounders as a common supportive move. However, native speakers had more of a tendency to use Grounders both before and after the head act (*I have this mandatory FTX session this week which is part of my ROTC scholarship. Is there any way I could get an extension on my paper? I really don't think I'll have time to write a paper with this kind of commitment*). Additionally, nonnative speakers and native Korean speakers used more Apologies in their requests than did the native English speakers.

In Situation 2, the requester is not endowed with a "contractual" right to make his or her request, just as the requestee is by no means obligated to comply with it. On the other hand, since borrowing money is a common transaction among best friends (and does not constitute a face-threatening act) the request may be performed without an abundance of politeness. Speakers from all three groups occasionally used the most direct level (*Give me some money.*)[4] Most respondents chose to use the Preparatory requests of the type: *Can/could you...?*

The request may be performed without a high frequency of supportive moves. All three groups used only Grounders and Promises of Reward. However, nonnative speakers and native Korean speakers used Grounders more than native English speakers did.

[4]Only male subjects in all three groups used imperatives in this situation.

Table 3
Situation 3: Restaurant

Directness Levels	Native English		Non-native English		Native Korean	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. Mood Derivable	0	0	1	6.7	0	0
2. Performative	0	0	0	0	0	0
3. Locution Derivable	1	6.7	0	0	0	0
4. Want Statement	0	0	0	0	0	0
5. Suggestory Formula	0	0	1	6.7	0	0
6. Preparatory	7	46.7	9	60	8	80
7. Hints	7	46.7	4	26.7	2	20
Supportive Moves						
1. Preparator	0	0	0	0	0	0
2. Precommitment	0	0	0	0	0	0
3. Apology	0	0	1	6.7	1	0
4. Grounder	12	80	14	93.	9	9
5. Disarmer	0	0	0	0	0	0
6. Promise of Reward	0	0	0	0	0	0

+dominance -social distance

In Situation 3, the requester (customer) has authority over the requestee (waiter). In addition, the requester has a definite right to make his or her request. Consequently, it is both unlikely that the request will be perceived as an imposition by the requestee and as a particularly difficult undertaking by the requester. In such a situational environment, it would seem likely that the subjects would feel licensed to use imperatives, but on the contrary, all three groups conformed to the usage of the least direct strategies—Preparatory and Hints. The nonnative English group commonly used the same pattern as the native English group—*Can/Could you...?* However, two of the native speakers began their requests with the consultative device—*Do you think you can...?* whereas none of the nonnative speakers used this form. Although nonnative speakers used almost the same amount of Hints, native speakers again differed in their request structure. While nonnative speakers used simple strong hints—*I ordered steak to be well done*—, some native English speakers began their strong hints with—*I think/believe I ordered this to be well done.*

Due to the varying social factors of this specific situation, the request may be performed by speakers without their using an abundance of supportive moves. In all three groups, most subjects used only Grounders for each request.

In Situation 4, the request is highly face-threatening act in both English and Korean, because the requestee has no fixed obligation to fulfill it, and the requester and requestee are non-intimates. However, the next door neighbor is disturbing the requester; thus the requester has a definite right

Table 4
Situation 4: Loud Music

Directness Levels	Native English		Non-native English		Native Korean	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. Mood Derivable	0	0	4	26.7	0	0
2. Performative	0	0	1	6.7	0	0
3. Locution Derivable	0	0	0	0	0	0
4. Want Statement	5	33.3	1	6.7	4	40
5. Suggestory Formula	0	0	0	0	0	0
6. Preparatory	10	66.7	9	60	6	60
7. Hints	0	0	0	0	0	0
Supportive Moves						
1. Preparator	0	0	0	0	0	0
2. Precommitment	1	6.7	1	6.7	0	0
3. Apology	2	13.3	2	13.3	3	30
4. Grounder	15	100	15	100	10	100
5. Disarmer	0	0		0	0	0 0
5. Promise of Reward	0	0		1	6.7	= 0 0

-dominance +social distance

to ask the neighbor to turn down the music. Taking all of these factors into consideration, the requester must be able to be polite yet show his or her displeasure firmly. Nonnative English speakers were more direct in their requests than were both the native English group and the native Korean group. This deviation from both groups might signal a lack of grammatical proficiency on the part of the non-native English group. Among the native English speakers, 33% used Level 4=Want Statement and phrased their requests similarly: *I would appreciate it if you'd turn it down.* The remaining 67% requests at Level 6=Preparatory Conditions and used the routine: *Do you mind turning down the music a little?*

The native Korean group also used Want Statements (*It would be nice if you lowered your music.*) and Preparatory Conditions (*Could you calm down more?*). However, in the nonnative English group, only one subject used a Want statement whereas 27% requested at the most direct level=Mood Derivable (*Please turn down the music*). Although the requesters are being disturbed, this use of imperatives might seem rude to a native English speaker. In contrast, nonnative speakers' usage of Preparatory Conditions was similar to that of native speakers (NNS=60%, NSE=67%). However, nonnative speakers failed to show their displeasure clearly by using the routine *Can/Could/Will you...?* instead of *Do you mind...?* Although *Do you mind...?* is considered a mitigator on the internal level, in this type of situation it can show that the speaker is not happy with the actions of the hearer.

In some cases nonnative speakers are either too forceful and in others not forceful enough. The cause of these deviations might be due to their unfamiliarity with the routines: *Do you mind if..* and *I'd appreciate it if...*

Table 5
Situation 5: Getting Off Work Early

Directness Levels	Native English		Non-native English		Native Korean	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. Mood Derivable	0	0	1	6.7	1	10
2. Performative	0	0	0	0	0	0
3. Locution Derivable	0	0	0	0	0	0
4. Want Statement	0	0	0	0	0	0
5. Suggestory Formula	0	0	0	0	0	0
6. Preparatory	15	100	7	46.7	4	40
7. Hints	0	46.7	7	46.7	5	50
Supportive Moves						
1. Preparator	4	26.7	0	0	0	0
2. Precommitment	0	0	0	0	0	0
3. Apology	0	0	5	33.3	33	0
4. Grounder	15	100	15	100	10	100
5. Disarmer	1	6.7	0	6.7	0	0
6. Promise of Reward	6	40	32	0	5	50

+dominance -social distance

In Situation 5, all of the native English respondents used Preparatory conditions to request. The most commonly used expressions in this level were mitigated with consultative devices: *Would it be alright to...?* and *Do you think I could..?* Although 47% of nonnative speakers also used Preparatory conditions, again they limited these requests to *Can I...?* even though native Korean speakers used phrases that were comparable to the English consultative forms (*Is it alright to...?*)

Both nonnative English speakers and native Korean speakers were less direct. Nonnative speakers' usage of Hints (47%) is most likely the result of negative transfer since the native Korean speakers also commonly used this level of directness (50%). Most of the Hints seem as though they are simply declarations, and the subjects do not appear to be making requests (*I need to go there/I have to pick my mother up at the airport/I wish to go*). However, it is the responsibility of the requestee (boss) to make a final decision and give his or her approval. Therefore, in essence, these strong hints act as requests.

How, then, does this situation differ from Situation 1 (Asking a Professor for an Extension)? Even though the requestees in both situations have authority over the requester, why do the requesters use Hints in Situation 5 but not in Situation 1? To answer this question, the researcher asked one native English speaker and one native Korean speaker which situation placed more of an imposition on the requestee. Both informants agreed that more of an imposition was placed on the boss rather than the professor. Therefore, it can be assumed that Korean speakers in both groups used Hints to be less direct and more polite. However, in the United States,

Table 6
Situation 6: Baby-sitting

Directness Levels	Native English		Non-native English		Native Korean	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. Mood Derivable	1	6.7	9	60	6	60
2. Performative	0	0	0	0	0	0
3. Locution Derivable	4	26.7	20	0	0	0
4. Want Statement	0	0	0	0	0	0
5. Suggestory Formula	1	6.7		20	2	20
6. Preparatory	2	13.3	0	0	2	20
7. Hints	7	46.7	0	0	0	0
Supportive Moves						
1. Preparator	0	0	0	0	0	0
2. Precommitment	0	0	0	0	0	0
3. Apology	0	0	0	0	0	0
4. Grounder	14	93.3	4	26.7	5	50
5. Disarmer	0	0	0	0	0	0
6. Promise of Reward	3	20	2	13.3	2	20

+dominance -social distance

stating what one would do, have to do, or hope to do, rather than explicitly asking for permission might seem rude to the requestee. Native English speakers in "Getting Off Work Early" differed from their answer in "Asking a Professor for an Extension" in that they used more consultative devices (mentioned above) when requesting.

Native English and non-native English speakers used the same types of supportive moves as they did in "Asking a Professor an Extension." Neither of the two Korean groups used Preparators before a request whereas 27% of native English speakers used Preparators such as: *I have a request to make./Can I ask you something?* Again, both Korean groups used Apologies before making the request (NNS=33% and NSK=30%). Perhaps nonnative speakers used Apologies because of their lack of Preparator usage. It seems necessary to make a supportive move (Apology or Preparator) before giving justifications (Grounders) and requesting in both native and nonnative English groups in this type of situation.

In native English speaker requests, the spread of directness levels was much more pronounced than it is in both Korean groups in Situation 6. Nonnative English speakers were also much more direct in their requests as baby-sitters; 60% used imperatives (Mood derivable) whereas 47% of native English speakers used the least direct strategy—Hints (*It's time to go to bed.*) Usage of imperatives seems to be transfer induced; 60% of native Korean speakers as well requested at the Mood Derivable level.

All groups used only two supportive moves—Grounders and Promises of rewards. All but one of the native English speakers used Grounders (*Your parents are gonna be really mad at me*). Nonnative speakers and native

Korean speakers used Grounders much less frequently (27% and 50% respectively).

Negative transfer of pragmatic rules from Korean seems to play a major role in both directness level and external modification (Grounders) in this situation. This may be due to the factor of age. The significance of age difference is much more pronounced in Korea than in the United States. Perhaps adults in Korea do not feel a need to be indirect and to mitigate requests with all children. Most native English speakers avoided imperatives, gave justifications, and left room for negotiation when making requests to other people's children. If nonnative speakers use the same strategies as their native Korean counterparts, then a problem might arise in that American children might not be accustomed to such forceful language from their baby-sitter.

Conclusions

In all three language groups, request realizations are determined by the sociopragmatic features of the situational context. However, nonnative speakers deviated from native English speaker norms in some situations due to the effect of the pragmatic rules of Korean.

In analyzing the oral DCT requests of Situation 5 (Getting Off Work Early) and Situation 6 (Baby-sitting), examples of negative transfer in directness levels were found. In requesting to get off work early, nonnative speakers and native Korean speakers were much more indirect—which might seem rude to a native English speaker in this type of situation. In contrast, nonnative speakers were overly direct in asking a child to go to sleep.

Although not quantitatively tested, this study has not indicated an overuse of external modification as claimed by researchers in past studies (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain 1986: 47-61; House & Kasper 1987: 1250-1288). Rather, learners sometimes chose different types of supportive moves according to the situation which might have been a result of negative transfer. Situation 1 (Professor's Office) and Situation 5 (Getting Off Work Early), both requestee=dominant/imposition=high, required the most supportive moves from all three groups. Transfer from Korean might have come into play in nonnative speakers' non-use of Preparators and overuse of Apologies. In Situation 2 (Asking a Friend for Money), both Korean groups used more Grounders to justify their request for money.

A summary of findings concerning Korean learners of English in general is a difficult undertaking because the learners' request realizations in this study were highly variable according to the social context. One can not conclude from this study that Korean ESL learners are generally more direct or indirect or use more or less supportive moves. These findings have merely illustrated certain contexts in which Koreans deviate from native speakers.

Past research has indicated that formal instruction concerning speech acts and the social rules of language use can assist learners in communicating more appropriately in the target language (Olshtain & Cohen 1990: 45-65; Billmyer 1990: 6). Therefore, this type of study not only is useful in supplying teachers and materials developers with native speaker baseline data, but also indicates how and in what situations certain groups deviate from native speaker norms. It should therefore be a major goal to teach of relevant general cultural schemata and to make nonnative learners aware of differences between their own cultural schemata and those of native speakers.

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Appendix A

Request Instrument

You will be asked to read six brief situations. I will play the person you are requesting to. Respond as much as possible as you would in an actual situation. Your responses will be tape recorded. Indicate when you've finished reading.

SITUATION 1:

You have a paper due in one of your classes next week. However, you will be very busy this week and don't have any time to write it. You go to your professor's office to ask for more time to write the paper.

How do you request an extension?

SITUATION 2:

You are at a record store with your best friend. There's a CD you really want to buy, but you don't have any money.

How do you ask your friend to lend you the money?

SITUATION 3:

At a restaurant you order a steak to be well-done. However, the waiter brings a rare steak.

What do you say to the waiter?

SITUATION 4:

You are trying to studying for an exam which will be given tomorrow. However, your neighbor, who is also a student from your school but you've never met, is playing music very loudly, and you can't concentrate. The library is closed, and there is no other place to study but in your apartment.

What do you say to your neighbor?

SITUATION 5:

Your mother will be visiting from out of town, and you want to pick her up at the airport. However, her flight arrives at 3:00 PM, but you have to work until 5:00 PM.

How do you ask you boss to let you out of work early?

SITUATION 6:

You are baby-sitting a four year old boy. He has been very energetic all night. You want him to go to sleep because you are tired, and it is one hour past his bedtime.

What do you say to the boy?